

A WEEKLY INFORMATION DIGEST

JOHN GARRETT, EDITOR
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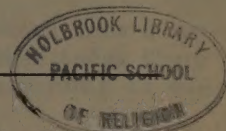
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Twenty-fourth Year

March 8, 1957

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YUGOSLAVIA

WCC to Aid Hungarian Refugees in Yugoslavia

Five members of the staff of the World Council of Churches left Geneva for Yugoslavia March 8 to aid in the resettlement of the approximately 17,000 Hungarian refugees now in that country.

According to Dr. Edgar H. S. Chandler, director of the WCC's Service to Refugees, the Council has been asked by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to send a resettlement and a welfare worker to Yugoslavia to help deal with a situation that the UN hopes can be cleared up in six months.

George Wood, an American and former staff member of Church World Service, will do welfare work. The resettlement officer has not been named. Also making the trip to help set up the program will be Dr. Chandler, the Rev. Raymond E. Maxwell, secretary for Orthodox Churches and Countries, and the Rev. John D. Metzler, secretary for Material Aid and Surplus Commodities. The Lutheran World Federation will also be working in Yugoslavia.

Of the 17,000 refugees who have crossed the Hungarian border into Yugoslavia about 4,000 are Protestant, Dr. Chandler said, and the WCC will register them for immigration. Some will be resettled in Scandinavia, some in Western Europe and the rest overseas, he said.

(At the moment, the Immigration and Naturalization Service of the United States says that the U.S. program is limited to Hungarian refugees who fled to Austria. Admission of refugees from Yugoslavia into the U.S. would depend, the Immigration Service said, either on expansion of the present "parolee" program or on Congressional action on proposed revisions of the McCarran-Walter Immigration Act.)

In the present situation in Yugoslavia, the refugees are closely confined, either in camps or in guest houses and hotels scattered all around the country, and are not able to have much if any contact with the local churches. It is known that five theological students from the Reformed Seminary in Budapest are among the refugees in Yugoslavia.

E.P.S., Geneva

UNITED STATES

Middle East Radio Transmitter

(New York, N.Y.) - A 100,000 watt radio transmitter, as powerful as any in the area, will be erected in the Near East and supported by cooperating Protestant foreign missions boards, according to Dr. W. Burton Martin, executive head, RAVEMCCO, broadcasting unit of the National Council of Churches' Division of Foreign Missions.

The station, which will be operated in cooperation with the Near East Christian Council, will be ready in one year provided the franchise is granted. Exact location is to be determined, Dr. Martin said, but franchise negotiations are progressing favorably.

According to plans for the new station, programs will be educational and cultural as well as religious. Broadcasts will reach as far as Indonesia and South Africa. Operating on an eight-hour, seven-day week schedule, the programs will be beamed to the whole Arabic speaking world.

Dr. Martin said that although twenty-five per cent of the staff would be American in the beginning, plans are being made to train local radio personnel to take over. This is in line with the RAVEMCCO (radio, audio-visual education, and mass communications committee) policy in stations now operated in Seoul, Korea, in the Philippines, and elsewhere.

The broadcasts will find a wide audience in the Arab world, Dr. Martin said, citing the 105,000 radio licenses issued in Egypt alone last year. E.P.S., Geneva

POLAND

German Church Leaders Visit Polish Churches

A group of German Protestants, led by Dr. Martin Niemöller, have returned from a two-week visit to the Protestant churches in Poland. The churchmen reported that today there are about 200,000 members and 106 pastors in the Polish church, and the membership is decreasing because so many Protestants have emigrated.

Many congregations have become too small to support their pastors and many have had to disband. Recent political events have tended to strengthen Catholicism, according to Dr. Hanfried Krüger, head of the Ecumenical Center at Frankfurt-am-Main, and a member of the delegation. He said that many Polish Protestants are mistrusted as not being altogether loyal to the nation.

The theological students are trained at the Academy of Christian Theology at Chylice, near Warsaw, which is supported by all the Protestant and Old Catholic Churches. There are about sixty students, eight of them women. More than half of them are members of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession, but the number of students training for the ministry is still inadequate to deal with the widely scattered churches.

The German church leaders met Dr. Sztachelski, the minister of the Polish church, in Warsaw and discussed with him the possibility of arranging an exchange of professors and students with the Evangelical Church in Germany, and permission for services to be held in German in Upper Silesia and East Prussia, former German provinces.

Dr. Niemöller, president of the Church of Hesse, preached in Warsaw in the church of the Trinity and the German visitors attended an ecumenical meeting in Warsaw. In Teschen, Dr. Niemöller spoke at a service attended by 2,500 persons. He and other members of the delegation also spoke at pastors' conferences and visited many German congregations.

E.P.S., Geneva

GREECE

Church of Greece Considers Topics for Special Synod

(Athens) - Prelates of the Church of Greece have been asked to consider topics that will be discussed at a proposed convocation of an all-Orthodox preparatory synod, which is to make arrangements for the convocation of an Ecumenical Synod of the All Holy Orthodox Church. The ecumenical synod would be attended by the various autocephalous national Orthodox churches.

The topics were drawn up by the Theological Commission of the Church of Greece and submitted to that Church's Holy Synod which, after approving the topics, referred them to the hierarchy of the Church of Greece and the professors of theology at Athens and Salonica Universities for comment and suggestions.

Some of the topics include consideration of measures to be taken for reorganization of the monastic institutions; definition of the rituals for the canonization of saints; codification of the Holy Canons and canon law regulations; reorganization of ecclesiastical courts on a uniformed basis; education of the clergy; definition and direction of relationships with the World Council of Churches and the ecumenical movement in general, and especially with the Faith and Order movement. E.P.S., Geneva

NEAR EAST

New Patriarch of Jerusalem

Benedictos Papadopoulos, who was elected Patriarch of Jerusalem in January succeeds the late Patriarch Timothy.

Patriarch Benedictos was born in 1892 in Nicomedia, Asia Minor. He is a graduate of the Theological School of Jerusalem and of the Law School of Athens University.

He represented the Patriarch of Jerusalem at the Faith and Order Conference of Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1927. In 1929 he was ordained as priest and appointed Exarch of the Holy Sepulchre in Athens. In 1950 he represented the Patriarch of Jerusalem at a conference in Geneva about the internationalization of Jerusalem. In 1951 he was named Archbishop of Tiberias. The new patriarch is the author of many historical, canonical and theological studies. E.P.S., Geneva

JAPAN

Japanese Christians to Visit China

Twelve Christian leaders will leave Japan on April 23 for a month-long good-will visit to China, led by the Rev. Junichi Asano, minister of the Mitake Church of the United Church of Christ in Japan and a professor at Aoyama Gakuin and Japan Biblical Seminary.

Other members of the party will include representatives of the YWCA, the Japan Evangelical Alliance Church, the WCTU, the YMCA, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Friends of Jesus Peace Society, Lutheran and Baptist pastors, and the editor of a Christian weekly. E.P.S., Geneva

NETHERLANDS

WCC Statement on Nuclear Tests Sent to Cabinet

The General Synod of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands, at its meeting February 4-6, unanimously decided to send the Dutch cabinet the statement on atomic experiments adopted by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches at its meeting in August, 1956. The statement pointed out the danger from experimental tests of nuclear weapons and called "upon the churches to appeal to their governments and the United Nations to negotiate an agreement for the discontinuance, or limitation and control, of these tests."

The General Synod asked the cabinet to instruct the Dutch delegation to the United Nations to work for consideration of the appeal by the UN. E.P.S., Geneva

NORWAY

Free Churches Doubtful about State Support

The new cultural program published by the Cultural Committee of the Norwegian Social Democratic Party proposes that the Free Churches, in the name of religious freedom, ought to receive the same public support as the Lutheran National Church, in proportion to their number of members. It appears, however, from a statement by the chairman of the Norwegian Free Church Council, Dr. Alf Lier, that the Free Churches are doubtful about accepting such grants. Dr. Lier said:

"I want to make it quite clear that we have never asked for public grants in support of our work... Another matter is that already several years ago we drew attention to the fact that the deduction for church subscriptions allowed for Free Church members in calculating the taxes is far too small. As is well known, we pay our ministers, organists, church wardens, and for the erection and maintenance of church buildings ourselves, without aid of any kind from outside... But considering this fact, the deduction allowed is ridiculously small."

To the question whether it would not change the attitude of the Free Churches towards public grants if they were simply offered by the authorities, Dr. Lier answered:

"It all depends on circumstances. If, for instance, the offer were accompanied by the stipulation that the state should be represented in our executive committee - a stipulation usually connected with government grants to private institutions - then the offer should be turned down without any hesitation, as far as I can see... The Free Churches consider it of vital importance to be free, that is independent of the state. It might be another question as far as our social institutions are concerned."

E.P.S., Geneva

UNITED STATES

LWF Assembly

New York, N.Y.) - Six Lutheran leaders from Europe, Asia and America will appear as speakers at the public events that will highlight evening sessions of the Third Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation in Minneapolis, August 15-25.

Speakers will be featured in programs to be presented under the general theme of "Our Mission to All Peoples," each emphasizing a major area of Lutheran activity and concern in the world. Some of the programs will be given outdoors and are expected to attract upwards of 50,000 persons.

The public events will begin August 17 with "Our Mission at Home", with Dr. Reinold von Thadden-Trieglaff of Fulda, president of the German Evangelical Kirchentag, and Dr. George Aus, vice president of Luther Theological Seminary at St. Paul, Minn., as speakers.

The Rt. Rev. Rajah B. Manikam, Bishop of Tranquebar in the Tamil Lutheran Church of India, and president of the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India, will speak August 17 on "Our Mission to the Whole World". The Rt. Rev. Otto F. Dibelius, Bishop of the Church of Berlin-Brandenburg, and chairman of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKID), will discuss "Our Mission to Mankind through Christ-like Love and Service," Aug. 20.

On Aug. 23, Dr. O. Frederick Nolde, director of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, will speak on "Our Mission to Civil Authorities". The final public event will take place Aug. 24 when the program "Our Mission to Youth" will feature the Rt. Rev. Hanns Lilje, Bishop of Hannover, Germany, who will complete his five-year term of office as president of the Lutheran World Federation at this Assembly.

Delegates and official visitors attending the Assembly will represent at least seventy church bodies in thirty-seven countries, according to appointments reported in Geneva to date. E.P.S., Geneva

SWEDEN

Women Divinity Students Meet in Sweden

There are 256 women church workers in Finland, all of whom have completed their theological studies. Of these, twenty per cent are employed as parish workers, mainly in Helsinki. These facts were given last month at a conference for women divinity students held at Sparreholm, Sweden. In Sweden there are 160 women graduates in theology, a few of them directly engaged in parish work. In Norway there are thirty five, with one doing ecclesiastical work at a hospital in Oslo and two doing parish work. There are twenty-five candidates in Denmark, four of them ministers. In Sweden and Finland there is no legislation to permit women to take holy orders and in Norway, where it is now possible, no woman has yet applied.

At the Sparreholm conference, the women said that they had no desire to force matters in places where they are not already admitted to holy orders. But they pointed out that there are a number of fields where women candidates in theology could do increased work. They suggested hospital work, social work and teaching. E.P.S., Geneva

SCANDINAVIA

Development of Religious Broadcasting

The radio corporations in Sweden and Denmark are discussing a Norwegian proposal that there should be joint transmissions of church services in the northern countries. The plan, if adopted, would be to broadcast a joint northern church service once a year.

A representative of the American Radio Missionary Society has visited Denmark to discuss the possibility of establishing a European religious broadcasting station on the Danish island of Bornholm in the Baltic Sea. Plans for the proposed station have not as yet been clearly outlined.

The Swedish radio has begun broadcasting church services with a new twist. Instead of the usual uninterrupted broadcast of the services, there will be a running commentary and description during the service to help the listeners follow what is going on in the church.

Since January 1 a series of Christian programs in Norwegian has been broadcast from

Tangier, sponsored by the Norwegian Lutheran Mission. The programs are recorded in Norway and sent to Tangier for transmission. The reason, church officials say, for broadcasting from Tangier, is because broadcasting in Norway is the monopoly of the Norwegian National Broadcasting Corporation. E.P.S., Geneva

UNITED STATES

Visit to Istanbul, Athens

(New York, N. Y.) - Two officials of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs and the general secretary of the World Council of Churches visited Istanbul, Turkey, March 8-10.

Sir Kenneth Grubb, London, CCIA chairman; Dr. O. Frederick Nolde, New York, director of CCIA; and Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, Geneva, Switzerland, WCC general secretary, discussed "peaceful adjustments of international relations" and "the rights and freedoms of minorities" with the foreign minister of Turkey and the governor of Istanbul. They also had sessions with the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople.

A statement released by Dr. Nolde on his return to New York, March 12, says:

"It has been the practice of the Churches' Commission on International Affairs to visit many countries in the interests of better international understanding. On these occasions they have conferred with representatives of government and with the heads of the churches which are members of the World Council of Churches.

"In Istanbul the World Council officials have followed this pattern and have been graciously received both by the Foreign Minister and by the Governor of Istanbul. In the course of these talks, the importance of the peaceful adjustment of international relations and of the rights and freedoms of minorities has been emphasized.

"They have been most cordially welcomed by the Ecumenical Patriarch with whom, as was natural, they had many matters of common interest to discuss, since the Ecumenical Patriarchate has contributed most notably to the life and work of the World Council of Churches. The World Council regards the Ecumenical Patriarchate as a significant link between Turkey and the many nations in which the World Council has member churches.

"Prior to visiting Turkey, Dr. Visser 't Hooft, Sir Kenneth Grubb and Dr. Nolde spent two days in Athens where they had discussions with the Archbishop of Athens and other representatives of the Church of Greece concerning many matters of common concern, including the preparations for the meeting of the Central Committee on the Island of Rhodes in the summer of 1958."

In Brief

Heifer Project plans to reach 24 countries with increased shipments in 1957. The interfaith relief agency at New Windsor, Maryland, plans to ship 1,589 cattle, 894 goats, 187,060 chicks, 2,133 sheep, 389 pigs, 155 rabbits, 2,000 hatching eggs and seven packages of bees to war-devastated or agriculturally underdeveloped areas. The goals are based on requests from missionaries, United Nations teams and U.S. International Cooperation administration agricultural technicians.

* * * *

Bolivia and Paraguay have signed an agreement with the United States under which surplus goods may be shipped free to these two South American countries from U.S. ports by the U.S. government. The inland shipping costs will be covered by the receiving government and the goods will be duty free.

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Corrections:

EPS No. 6, page 3, Rumania:

The religious books mentioned were not Rumanian but Bulgarian and the numbers of nuns given are those in the largest monasteries in Rumania, Bulgaria and Serbia respectively.

EPS No. 8, page 1, Indonesia meeting:

For East Asia Council on Ecumenical Missions read Asia Council on Ecumenical Mission.

